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**Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), ‘Bristol 1461: Particulars of Account of Thomas Gibbes and Robert Strangways, customers, 26 March to 29 September 1461: Introduction’ (University of Bristol, PURE, 2016)<sup>1</sup>**

## Text and Comment

The customers’ ledger for 29 March to Michaelmas 1461 is the first complete particulars of account for Bristol to survive after a long gap that begins in the early years of the reign of Henry VI.<sup>2</sup> The parallel controlment is also extant, but is in poor physical condition.<sup>3</sup> Both documents evidence the political upheaval that had recently taken place. In early March 1461 Henry VI was supplanted by his cousin, Edward, duke of York. Edward IV was proclaimed king on 4 March 1461, and formally crowned on 28 June. The account notionally begins on 29 March, Palm Sunday in 1461, the day on which Edward IV consolidated his hold on the throne by his victory at the battle of Towton. The first entry in the ledger comes, however, only on 20 April, more than two weeks after Easter and three weeks after the commencement of the accounting period.

The first folio is not, as would be usual, a bifolium integrated into the structure of the book, but a single leaf, attached to the succeeding page by a narrow parchment ligature tied through the margin of both. The heading of the Bristol account is distinctive and must have been written after, rather than before, the series of ledger entries that follows. It appears to have been supplied by an Exchequer clerk rather than being written, as was usual, in the Bristol customs house. There are number of pointers to this: the heading follows the format of the Exchequer’s enrolled accounts rather than being a simple statement of officers and covering dates; is in an Exchequer hand rather than the hand of the document; and has been entered on the flyleaf of the ledger instead of being integral to the account. All this suggests that the original first folio, which would have included a reference to Henry VI, had been replaced by the Exchequer’s clerks with something that reflected the new political reality.

One of the two customers of Bristol, Thomas Gibbes, was reappointed by the Yorkist regime.<sup>4</sup> The second customer had been John Seneclé, appointed, like Gibbes, in August 1460. There is no obvious reason for Seneclé’s exclusion, and he would again serve as customer from Michaelmas 1463 to November 1465.<sup>5</sup> But in this critically important port of Bristol he was replaced by the hugely experienced Robert Strangways, who had served continuously as customer from 1449 to 1460, with the exception of the politically unquiet years of 1456-8.<sup>6</sup>

Alterations to the controlment roll are even more striking. Richard Alberton had been appointed as controller in the port 1 August 1460, and was reappointed 25 April 1461.<sup>7</sup> His

<sup>1</sup> The National Archives: Public Record Office, UK [TNA:PRO], E122/19/1. This transcription is an output of the ‘Cabot Project’ (University of Bristol, 2009-2016), funded by Gretchen Bauta, a private Canadian benefactor.

<sup>2</sup> Fragments of a ledger of 1441-2 have recently been discovered, but are seriously defective. At least one account from Henry VI’s first decade has also been identified among the undated customs fragments in the record class TNA: PRO, E122.

<sup>3</sup> TNA: PRO, E122/19/2.

<sup>4</sup> TNA: PRO, E356/21, rot. 31. First appointed 1460; appointed jointly with Strangways 26 March 1461, although the first notice on the Fine Rolls is his reappointment 14 May 1462, *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-1471*, pp. 70-72.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls 1452-1461*, pp. 253-4, 257; TNA: PRO, E356/21, rots. 31r, 31d.

<sup>6</sup> TNA: PRO, E356/20, rots. 30r-31d, 32d; E356/21, rot. 31r; *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-1471*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls 1452-1461*, p. 590; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1461-1467*, p. 12. He served until June 1462, and would again be appointed as controller after Edward IV’s restoration in 1471. He had also served 8 October 1453-28 November 1454, and 3 June 1455-25 November 1458; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1452-1461*, pp. 146, 201-2, 328, 459; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-1477*, p. 268; TNA: PRO, E356/21, rot. 31d.

roll, however, has been doctored. The portion covering entries from Michaelmas 1460, that is, from the end of September 39 Henry VI, has been cut out and the roll was given a new heading, stitched to the parchment in place of the portion excised, and referring only to Edward IV, with outside dates as for the customers' ledger.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the evidence of change, powerfully manifested in the make-up of the accounts, in other respects the appointment of the customers was a normalisation of arrangements. For the previous five months, responsibility had been split in order to provide for the expenses of the earl of Warwick for the keeping of the seas. Senecle and Gibbes had been responsible only for customs; Daniel Sheldon, appointed at the nomination of Warwick, had responsibility for tonnage and poundage, and his receipts of £120 5s 6d, by far the larger portion of the combined whole, were made over to the earl on 2 May 1461.<sup>9</sup> Sheldon was not again appointed as a customer in Bristol until Warwick's short period of ascendancy in 1469, and became controller in 1470, when Warwick dominated the readeption government of Henry VI.<sup>10</sup>

The account has a number of anomalies not commonly replicated in later accounts. The first two entries, for the *Trinity* of Newport and the *Marie* of Bristol, do not fully establish the ship type, recording only the abbreviated form 'Nav' in both the customers' and the controller's particulars. This could be an abbreviation of either *Navis*, which was generally applied by Bristol's customs officers only to ships of at least 150 tons burden, or a *Navicula* (little ship), which would imply a vessel of c.30-150 tons. Whilst the passage of the *Trinity* from Ireland might suggest a *navicula*, other records indicate that the *Trinity* was a large *navis*, not exceeding 400 tons, which was licensed in May 1462 to carry 300 pilgrims from Bristol to Santiago de Compostella in Spain.<sup>11</sup> *Marie* and its variants is too common a name for a Bristol ship for her to be identified with absolute confidence, and her return is not recorded in the account. There is, however, a distinct possibility that she is the *Mary Redcliffe* [of Bristol], which exited Plymouth six months later under the same master, Richard Joyes.<sup>12</sup> One other pointer is that when the *Marie* left Bristol on 20 April 1461, her cargo included broadcloth and Welsh frieze belonging to William Canynges, owner of the *Mary Redcliffe*.<sup>13</sup>

Three ledger entries are mendacious. Eleanor Carus-Wilson long ago noticed the return on 25 August of a flotilla from 'Norbarn' [Bergen] in Norway carrying a cargo of stockfish. The ships were the *Christefre* of Bristol, the *Marie* of Bristol and the *Jelian* of Fowey. In reality, it seems likely the vessels had come from Iceland, from whence Bristol acquired all its stockfish, having probably set sail before Edward seized the throne at the start of March. This would have meant that this English fleet would have lacked a valid licence

<sup>8</sup> The earlier portion is no longer extant but was audited in Michaelmas term 1461, when the first account of the new reign was also presented. The heading of the controlment is written on a rectangular slip of parchment, certainly once attached with horizontal stitching at its lower edge (holes in both the roll and the separate heading correspond) and probably also at the right hand edge. Although the heading has been trimmed in modern times, there are clear stitching holes on the roll, and suggestions of matching stitching on the heading.

<sup>9</sup> TNA: PRO, E368/234, States and Views Mich 1 Edw IV, rot. 7; E356/21, m. 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Cal Fine Rolls 1461-1471*, pp. 248-50; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-1477*, p. 230.

<sup>11</sup> Her owner, Morgan ap Jankyn ap Philip, a former receiver of Newport for the Duke of Buckingham, had obtained a safe conduct of one year's duration 16 March 1460 intended to secure her freedom from arrest [for the king's service] or other interruption, either at sea or when in a port 'of [the king's] obedience. This was so that she could carry on the business of merchantry at a time of political and maritime disruption. On 5 February 1462 the shipowner obtained a similar licence from Edward IV: TNA: PRO, C76/142, m. 18; C76/145, m. 8. In neither case is the actual size of the ship recorded. The danger of a ship being arrested for naval service was real. For instance, in September 1461 the *Christopher Damme* of Bristol was forced to serve the King in Wales before proceeding on a voyage: E. M. Carus-Wilson, *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Later Middle Ages* (Bristol, 1937), p. 126. For the licence to St James, TNA:PRO C76/146, m. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Exited 21 October 1461: TNA: PRO, E122/114/1.

<sup>13</sup> Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade of Bristol*, pp. 138, 140, for Canynges' ships.

under Edward IV's great seal permitting trade to Iceland. Stating that the vessels had come from Norway might thus have been seen as a politic way of side-stepping this legal anomaly. It was not, however, the only precaution taken. A month earlier, the Bristol merchant John Shipward, who was the licensee of the *Julian* of Fowey, seems to have personally sought out the king. The *Julian* had sailed to Iceland under a two-year licence granted by Henry VI. Shipward now petitioned Edward IV for a new licence allowing her safe return. This was granted, valid for six months from 22 July 1461, with the unusual form of warranty that the order to the king's clerks for the issue of the licence was made by the king 'ore tenus' that is, it was a spoken order given directly by the king.<sup>14</sup> John Gaussem, a Londoner, and George Roche, recorded as the sole merchant freighting on the *Christopher* and the *Marie* of Bristol, similarly protected their investment. Their grant, issued 23 July, made no reference to their earlier licence from Henry VI, and was valid for a year to both Iceland and 'Finmark', northern Norway. Entirely conventional in its wording, nevertheless it must surely have been intended to cover the entry of the *Christopher* and *Marie* which were, at that time, still abroad. This can be assumed because July 1461 would have been far too late in the year to commence a voyage to Iceland, while a licence that was only valid till 23 July 1462 would have been of little use for a voyage commencing the following spring, since it would have been hard to guarantee that the vessels would return to England before the licence expired.<sup>15</sup>

The presence in the port of two Cinque port ships, the *Michell* of Dover and the *Kateryn* of Rye, is not repeated in any extant Bristol account of the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>16</sup> It is possible that they chose to operate through Bristol this year because the Bristol Channel was often regarded as safer than the English Channel during periods of political uncertainty. Alternatively, the ships might have been displaced by naval activity on behalf of the king and the earl of Warwick, who was warden of the Cinque Ports.

The 90-ton *Michell* exited to Bordeaux 7 September 1461 in the company of the *Christopher* of London, carrying cargoes for John Fawne and Robert Pudsey, both London merchants, and the *Marie* of London, in which John Batte and Thomas Symond traded in partnership. France was then a hostile power, and sailing to Bordeaux would normally require a licence. But in the first week of September 1461 Edward IV was in Bristol. It thus seems likely that the marginal 'R' against the *Marie* in the customers' ledger stood for *Rex* (King). If so, it might indicate that the king had granted an oral licence that was not enrolled, or that the vessel was sailing *pro Rege* (for the king) to Bordeaux to bring back wines for the royal household.<sup>17</sup>

The last two entries in the ledger were both for foreign ships whose letters of safe conduct were registered in the Great Red Book of Bristol, the 240 ton *Mary* of Guipúzcoa, and her namesake, another *Mary*, of 200 tons. The safe conduct for the larger *Mary* in particular can be linked with licences to trade obtained by John Powke of Bristol and by John

<sup>14</sup> Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade of Bristol*, p. 125; she was of about 160 tons, and Bristol-owned, *ibid.*, pp. 122-4. Carus-Wilson omits the unusual warranty, TNA: PRO, C76/145, m. 27. Shipward obtained a new licence 30 November 1461, for a ship of 240 tons or less, which would still have been valid for the new sailing season in 1462. Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade of Bristol*, pp. 127-9, where it is recited in full. Edward IV's licence allowed for the use of factors, which may have been intended to cover the large number of merchants shipping on the *Julian*. Despite all this, recording the ships' supposed port of departure of Bergen was presumably seen as a useful additional precaution.

<sup>15</sup> Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade of Bristol*, pp. 121-2, 125.

<sup>16</sup> TNA: PRO, E122/19/1, fos. 5v, 6v.

<sup>17</sup> TNA: PRO, E122/19/1, fo. 6v. There is no annotation in the controlment, E122/19/2. John Fawne and others had obtained a licence 13 May 1461 to trade in the *Michell* of 90 tons burden, valid until 1 January following, TNA: PRO, C76/145, m. 36; another licence for Fawne, C76/145, m. 34 for a ship of 120 tons. No licence has been found for the *Marie*, or for Batte and Symonds. For Edward IV in Bristol, Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade of Bristol*, p. 126.

Drewe, at that stage said to be of London.<sup>18</sup> In 1461 the subjects of Castile were still technically enemy aliens, and not until the treaty of 1467 did her merchants have free access to English ports.<sup>19</sup> Safe conducts were thus still advisable at this time for Castilian vessels.

In other respects the commodities shipped are typical for the port and time of year: although almost all the small quantity of wine imported is clearly from a ship that had broken bulk on the Welsh side of the Severn. Since Wales had no customs offices answerable to the king's Exchequer, any goods that arrived in a Welsh port and were then sent across to Bristol had to be declared at that point. This explains why on 20 May the arrival of four small Chepstow boats coming from Chepstow is recorded in the book. Between them, these boats carried a total of 14.25 tuns wine, 2.5 tons imported honey, 2 tons rosin, along with some wood ashes.

## **Editions of the text**

Orthographic differences between the ledger and the controlment have not been noted unless to resolve confusion in particular entries, and no detailed comparison of the two texts has been undertaken.

This account was edited in calendar format by Eleanor Carus-Wilson in 1937. To produce the new edition that follows, Carus-Wilson's text was input by Glenys Phillips into a spreadsheet format devised by Evan Jones.<sup>20</sup> The spreadsheet was then checked against the original manuscript to record ship type and original forms of place names, exposing in the process some minor discrepancies between the two readings of the document. A number of comments found in the spreadsheet are based on Carus-Wilson's volume. Additional comments have been supplied by Glenys Phillips and the editors. The foliation is as used in the manuscript and by Carus-Wilson. A more recent and prominent foliation, ignorantly applied, has been noticed in brackets. It numbers the nineteenth century cover as folio 1.

## **Calendar versus spreadsheet: differences of approach**

An overview of the two approaches to editing the text may be helpful. Carus-Wilson's text is closer to the (Latin) language of the original in the way that it records both commodities and the units in which they were counted. However, she does not note ship type. Our spreadsheet format is designed to facilitate data analysis, and thus calls for the entry of data in a slightly different way. For example, the '*allecium*' (herring) of the manuscript is listed as '*Fish*, Herring' to make it easier to sort the data by commodity type. As far as possible, the units of the goods listed have also been standardised to make it easier to calculate total quantities. This means that while Carus-Wilson would record a consignment as being '1 pipe 1 hogshead wine', we record it as 0.75 tuns. Following Carus-Wilson's practice, we have standardised common first names of masters and merchants. Carus-Wilson, however, makes more use of vernacular forms such as Morris rather than Maurice. Both approaches give surnames and ship names in their original form, albeit our format provides italicisation of extended abbreviations, where we are making suppositions about what the full form might be. Carus-Wilson did not. Carus-Wilson follows the manuscript in placing ship details (name, ports of origin and destination, master's name, and date of entry) as a heading preceding each

<sup>18</sup> E. W. W. Veale, ed, *The Great Red Book of Bristol pt. II* (Bristol Record Society, viii, 1938), p. 92; Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade*, p. 124; TNA: PRO, C76/145 m. 38.

<sup>19</sup> For the growth in Anglo-Castilian trade in the later fifteenth century see Wendy R. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1978), pp. 46-5, 88-90, 108-42.

<sup>20</sup> Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade*, pp. 209-18. Glenys Phillips was then an MA candidate in the Arts Faculty of the University of Bristol, and has since successfully completed her degree.

ship's lading and the record of customs dues paid; the spreadsheet repeats these details on every line so that they remain attached to merchants' names and commodities if the data is sorted, and become themselves capable of sort by individual elements of those ship details. Carus-Wilson omits the ship type, although Bristol's practice was to record it. We have included it in the spreadsheets, and it is further explained below.

## Editorial Conventions

All extension of abbreviations and other material supplied by the editors have been entered in italics.

The presence of editorial comments is marked by a red triangle in the upper corner of any cell, and appears on mouse hover. Comments on discrepancies in value/quantity have been attached to the 'commodity' where they are more clearly visible.

## Editorial practice: the spreadsheets

The comments that follow apply to all the spreadsheets 1461-c. 1495 produced under the aegis of the University of Bristol's Cabot Project. They broadly follow the format and guidelines established by Dr Evan Jones for his ESRC-funded Ireland-Bristol Trade Project.<sup>21</sup> Data is entered under the following heads:

**ENTRY:** This number indicates the order of each item in the account. It has been added by the editors to assist data analysis. In particular, it means that, however the data in the spreadsheet is sorted or filtered, it should always be possible to reorganize it back to the order of entries found in the manuscript.

**PORT [of Account]:** a small number of ledgers include returns for the small havens or creeks that came under the jurisdiction of Bristol. In these instances, an extra column has been inserted after the 'Entry' column to specify either Bristol as the head port, or the creeks, named at their first entry, but simply as creeks thereafter.

**SHIP TYPE:** Navis (large ship); Navicula (small ship); Batella or Bata (boat).<sup>22</sup> These are the conventions of the Bristol accounts, and may differ for other ports. Based on the cargoes carried by the vessels, it appears that the term navis was generally reserved for vessels of at least 150 tons burden, navicula covered those of c.30-150 tons, while batella or bata covers vessels from as little as 3 tons burden, to those of about 30 tons.<sup>23</sup> The terms are likely to have been quite roughly applied, however, and there are instances in which it appears the same vessel has been described as a batella in one place and a navicula in another. A few

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<sup>21</sup> Databases at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Ireland/datasets.htm> (accessed 29 January 2014); these were reformatted and published with indexes and abbreviated glossaries as Susan Flavin and Evan Jones, *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent 1503-1601* (Bristol Record Society, vol. 61, 2009). Editorial conventions are repeated at pp. xxii-xxv.

<sup>22</sup> 'Bata' is the less usual form, but was adopted without marks of abbreviation in some accounts from the mid 1470s onwards.

<sup>23</sup> Evan T. Jones, 'The shipping industry of the Severn Sea', Evan T. Jones and Richard Stone (eds), *The World of the Newport Medieval Ship* (forthcoming).

ledgers include entries for Carts (carts or ‘biga’) or packhorses carrying goods customed in Bristol overland to another port for export by sea.<sup>24</sup>

NAME [OF SHIP]: This follows the spelling given in the manuscript. It is worth noting that spelling variants can sometimes be quite marked. For instance, a ship called *Julian* in one place might be *Gellian* in another. Some ships were also given compound names (e.g. the *Mary Grace*) or include the surname of the owner (e.g. *Julian Hemming*).<sup>25</sup> A few vessels, such as the *Mary Redcliffe* and the *Mary Belhouse*, have particular Bristol associations.<sup>26</sup> The use of compound names was probably intended primarily to make it easier to distinguish two vessels that had the same ‘base’ name and came from the same port. The customs officers, however, were not always consistent in their recording practices, so the same ship can sometimes be recorded by slightly different name variants, including the omission of an owner’s surname despite the possibility of confusion with another ship.

PORT: This is the homeport of the ship, which was normally the place where the ship’s owner or owners lived. There was no formal need to register a ship to a particular port at this time, as was required in later centuries. The homeport is first listed as it appears in the manuscript, and then identified whenever possible by the modern name (Port Mod.) and country (Country of Origin). Because Brittany was an independent state until the marriage of Anne of Brittany with Louis XII in December 1491, Breton ports have been noticed as France (Brittany), emphasising the difference and facilitating geo-political analysis of the data. The formal union of Brittany with France was enacted in 1532.

At this period, ships with double names, such as the *Mary Redcliffe*, are often not assigned a homeport by Bristol’s customers. This was presumably because the ship was well known and the name was felt to be distinctive enough for there to be no ambiguity about which vessel was being referred to. In these instances, the port of origin has been entered in the spreadsheet as ‘not entered’ [in the manuscript] but the modern form of the homeport is supplied if the vessel can be identified from other sources.

MASTERS’ NAMES: First names (Master 1st) have been standardised into English from the Latin of the manuscript, but have been given in their original form when the clerks have clearly made no attempt to reproduce, or even invent, a Latin equivalent. Surnames (Master Surname) take the form used in the manuscript, with abbreviations extended (in italics) as appropriate. An exception has been made for Iberian names in those instances where the first name and surname have been run together in the manuscript. An attempt has been made to give a coherent version of these, with the form of the manuscript remarked in a note. The letter ‘v’ written as ‘u’ (English or Latin) or ‘b’ (Spanish/Portuguese) takes the form of the manuscript. The letters ‘u’ and ‘n’ (and other combinations of minims) cannot always be distinguished, leaving open the possibility of error.

DESTINATION: Each entry in the accounts indicates whether the ship is entering or leaving Bristol. They also normally indicate the place an outbound ship was said to be exiting to, (exunt [ad]) or where an inbound ship was coming from (venit de). In most cases it seems

<sup>24</sup> The inclusion of carts and packhorses was a result of the Tonnage and Poundage Act of 1472, and applied only to cloths packed for export. The provision was repealed in 1495. H. S. Cobb, *The Overseas Trade of London: Exchequer Customs Accounts 1480-1* (London record Society, 27, 1990), p. xlv.

<sup>25</sup> ‘*Mary Grace*’ and its variants was generally popular, including ships of London, Combe, and Lisbon; the *Julian Hemming* presumably belonged to the Bristol merchant John Hemming.

<sup>26</sup> St Mary Redcliffe is a noted Bristol church; Mary Belhouse was a particular devotion and chapel in the church of St Peter Port.

that the ‘destination’ listed is the last port of call of an inbound vessel, or the first foreign place the ship was expected to visit. Although specific towns or cities are sometimes given, in many cases the officer only listed the country or region. The name is recorded in the same way as homeport, the spelling being that of the manuscript. This is followed by an indication of the modern equivalent (Destination Mod.) and the country (Country of Destination), to make it easier to analyse the data in the accounts according to the places with which ships were trading.

Vessels entering from, or exiting to, their own homeport are often recorded as ‘de eadem’ (of the same [port]) or ‘ad eadem/eandem’ (to the same [port]) in the accounts. So the account might say, for instance, that the *Marie* of Chepstow ‘of the same port’ had entered on 20 May. In such cases, the actual port of destination is given, but rendered in italics to show that this is an editorial insertion. References to ‘Hispania’ or ‘Ispannia’ (Spain) seem, in practice, to indicate the ports of northern Spain. When a ship was going to southern Spain, which is not relevant to this particular account (1461), the clerk would typically record it as ‘Andalusia’ or name the port (e.g. Seville or Huelva).

**DATES:** given in the form dd/mm/yyyy. The ‘Date’ given in the account is the day that a ship was officially entered into the record, which was not necessarily the day that it physically entered or left the port. If the practice followed in the fifteenth century was similar to that of later centuries, on arrival in port the shipmaster, or another representative of the ship, would have gone to the customs house in Bristol to make a declaration of the inbound cargo. This would be the recorded date of entry, even if the ship itself was still five miles downriver near Avonmouth. When a ship was going outbound, it is likely that, in practice, goods were entered by different merchants over a number of days, or even weeks. The time lapse becomes obvious if records of prosecution for smuggling, or dates derived from the few surviving subsidiary documents that record individual payment of customs, are compared with the customers’ particulars.<sup>27</sup> The ‘exit’ date listed in the account would be day of the last recorded consignment entered into the books for a given ship. The physical departure of the ship from the Bristol area may have taken place days or weeks later – particularly if the ship needed to take on additional supplies, or if its departure delayed by poor weather. When one vessel entered or exited on the same day as the previously listed ship, the customs officer normally stated that the subsequent entry had occurred on ‘eodem die’ (the same day), rather than repeating the date. In the spreadsheet this has been replaced by a repetition of the date, to facilitate data analysis.

**MERCHANT NAMES:** These are treated in the same way as shipmaster’s names, with separate columns for the merchant’s first name (Merchant 1<sup>st</sup>) and surname (Merchant Surname). When one merchant was exporting or importing a range of goods, the customer might list each item on a separate line. They would always do this if the different items were subject to different types of customs dues, such as tonnage (which applied to wine), or poundage, which applied to goods paying *ad valorem* duties. Rather than repeating the merchant’s name on each new line, the customer simply stated that successive entries from the same merchant belonged to ‘idem’ (the same) or, in the case of joint shipments, ‘iidem’ (the same [merchants]). In the spreadsheets the full name of the merchant(s) concerned is repeated each time. Where the shipmaster was also the first named merchant, the manuscripts have only ‘idem magister’ (the same master). Again, the spreadsheets supply his full name in italics, followed by the word ‘master’ in Roman, to make clear that the merchant was the shipmaster.

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<sup>27</sup> Such subsidiary documents are discussed in Cobb, *Overseas Trade of London*, pp. xxv-vi, and by Stuart Jenks in his forthcoming edition of the London Customs Accounts 1445-6. We are indebted to Professor Jenks for sight of his draft Introduction.



Other occupations, such as soldier or grocer, have also been translated where present. It should be noted that some ambiguity of naming arises from the Latin of the accounts: 'Isabella', for example, could in the vernacular be Isabel or Elizabeth, while 'Jacobus' might be James, Jacob or Jack.

ORIGIN: The 'origin' of the merchant determined the rates of customs dues applied: with different rates for denizens, aliens and Hansards (merchants of the Hanseatic League). Since Bristol had very little Hansard trade, the merchants are overwhelmingly 'Indigenus' [Ind] or Alienigena [Alien].

Between 1467 and 1489 Castilians paid customs at denizen rates. They are thus 'denizen' or 'Ind', but their special status was additionally recorded by the customers as 'de Hispania'. This addition has been attached to the surname. Similarly remissions of customs, and shares in special licences, noticed by the customers as 'attorney and factor' is recorded as an addition to the surname, as is the partial remission of customs allowed to most Spaniards in 1477-8 as 'man and merchant of Guipuscoa in Spain'.<sup>28</sup>

COMMODITIES: QUANTITY AND UNIT: To facilitate data manipulation, small units of volume/weight such as hogshead (quarter of a tun/ton), pipe (half a tun/ton), and terce (third of a pipe of wine, or otherwise a third of the unit stated in the account) have been decimalised to parts of a tun/ton for commodities most frequently shipped in the larger unit. 'Dolia' has been translated as a tun for liquid measure, and ton for dry goods. Lasts of white herring – recorded only as 'herring' in the 1460s into the early 1470s – have been revalorised as barrels at a rate of 12 barrels to the last. Red herring, which appears in other accounts in lasts, barrels, or cades, as well as the more usual meise/mease, has been retained in the unit in which it is recorded in the accounts. Salt, rated differently on import to its re-export to Ireland, has also been left in the unit of the manuscript – usually either the ton or the wey.

A 'C' (hundred) in this period did not usually mean 100. If the officer was referring to individual pieces, most often the long hundred of 120 was meant. In those cases where a conversion is well established, a decimal figure is provided: so that 60 salted fish, for example, becomes 0.5 C. If there is any ambiguity, the figures have been left in the unit of the account. In the majority of instances the calculation was already done by the accountants themselves and the fraction, rather than the number, is recorded in the particulars.

The spreadsheet records the unit as a 'piece' if the customs officer was simply counting the number of items involved: the term itself is not found in the manuscript.<sup>29</sup> Roman numbers have been converted to Arabic, and 'M' (thousand) converted to 10C and its multiples where this is the usual unit of account. Pipes of woad are an oddity, in that the pipe is merely a unit of account, appearing as such both in charter parties and in the customs particulars. Bristol convention counted 'small bales', one of two actual units of trade, at the rate of sixteen to the pipe, with the accountants using the English term 'measure' for units smaller than a pipe. Where the translation is exact, the measures have been translated into pipes – as was sometimes done by the customers themselves; but otherwise left as measures. To do otherwise would introduce unnecessary distortion of the figures.

COMMODITIES: NAME: Most goods are listed by their Latin name, albeit the officers sometimes used an English name if they did not know the Latin equivalent. All commodity names have been anglicised and standardised apart from a few cases in which the authors

<sup>28</sup> For these privileges, and for the remission of half customs by way for reparation for English piracy, Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade*, pp. 53-6.

<sup>29</sup> The exception is 'pieces' of fruit, a known but ill-defined quantity, generally calculated at three 'piece' to the 'sort'.

have not been able to determine the nature or identity of the item. The glossaries produced by Evan T. Jones and Susan Flavin for the Bristol customs accounts of the sixteenth century provide much supplementary information.<sup>30</sup> They will be updated with new information derived from the fifteenth century accounts once the transcription of late fifteenth century Bristol particulars is complete.

Some commodities have been assigned to ‘families’ to assist data manipulation, particularly cloth and fish. This means that words have been supplied if necessary, always in italics, or a particular translation adopted. ‘Pannus sine grano’ (cloth without grain – i.e. woollen broadcloth dyed without using kermes) becomes, for example, cloth of assize, a term known and recognized at the time, and is given a notional value of £2 per cloth unless specifically valued in the manuscript. Salmon, to take just one type of fish, becomes *Fish*, Salmon. Other additions are by way of explanation. For example, the *dolia olei*’ (tuns of oil) in the manuscript becomes tuns of ‘Oil, *Olive*’. Other types of oil or grease are always distinguished in the accounts themselves.

COMMODITIES: VALUE: Goods paying ‘poundage’ (an *ad valorem* duty), were valued by the customs officer, since their valuation then determined the duty payable at the rate of one shilling in the pound (i.e. five percent). The value given seems to have been based on a ‘book of rates’ kept by the customs officer, which assigned a value to each type of commodity.<sup>31</sup> When considering the ‘value’ of trade it is important to remember that the market value of a particular consignment may have been somewhat different to that listed – depending on both the quality of the merchandise and the varying nature of supply and demand for the goods at that particular time. Values are recorded in the manuscript using roman numerals but given in the spreadsheet using Arabic numerals. So ‘cxij li. xiiij s. iiij d. qr.’ would appear as 112 pounds, 13 shillings, 4 pence, 1 farthing. This is entered in the spreadsheet using separate columns for pounds (£), shillings (s.), pence (d.) and farthings (f.). The figure recorded is the one that appears in the manuscript, even if the account is clearly in error. Where the clerk clearly has made an error, this fact is observed in a comment attached to the cell.

Although most of the values given in the accounts are the ones recorded by the customs officers themselves, values have been added by the authors in three instances. The main purpose of doing this is to facilitate the analysis of the varying value of trade moving through the port.<sup>32</sup> These additions are always signalled by the use of italics. Cloth of assize, as already noted, is assigned a value of £2, albeit the particulars themselves only assign such a valuation when the cloth was exported by aliens. Wine, which was Bristol’s principal import, is not formally valued in the accounts because it paid ‘tonnage’, which was a ‘specific duty’ (i.e. a duty that relates to quantity, rather than value) amounting to 3s. per tun. In the spreadsheet wine is assigned a value of £4 per tun. This is in line with the nominal value of imported wine subject to the duty of prisage, which valued a tun of wine at £4. In the case of both cloth of assize and wine, the customers record customs/subsidy paid, whereas the controller notes only ‘C’ for customs against cloth of assize and kersies, and ‘vini’ against wine. The third exception, used only when the particulars are defective, is valuations (or quantities) supplied by calculation from legible data in the manuscript. So, for instance, if the account states that 4 barrels of herring was imported but the recorded value is illegible,

<sup>30</sup> For commodities, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/1309> ; for first names, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/1310> ; and for place names, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/1311> .

<sup>31</sup> The earliest known book of rates dates to 1507, surviving only as a later transcript, Norman Scott Brien Gras, *The Early English Customs System* (London, 1918), pp. 694-706. The existence of earlier books of rates can, however, be inferred from the use of standardized valuations of goods in the Bristol customs accounts.

<sup>32</sup> This follows the convention earlier used by Wendy Childs for purposes of quantitative analysis: Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade*, pp. 63-4, 126-36.

the authors would have recorded the value as 20s., on the grounds that herring was always valued at 5s. per barrel. In all cases where the authors have assigned a value, the figures given are entered in italics, distinguishing them from values entered directly from the manuscript.

**MODERN £:** This total (Mod. £) is arrived at by an automated calculation common across all the transcribed accounts. It revalorizes each ‘value’, originally entered as pounds, shillings, and pence and half-pennies/farthings, in decimal units more familiar to a modern reader, and takes account of the occasional entries of units smaller than one penny.<sup>33</sup> So, £3 15s. would appear as £3.75, for example. The main purpose of doing this is to make it possible to use the spreadsheet to calculate the value of different categories of trade.

**DOCUMENT MEMBRANE/FOLIO:** The folio number (Doc fo) is that given in the manuscript, with a second foliation noted in brackets where present and conflicting. Membranes apply to rolls; folios to books or ledgers. In Bristol practice ‘folio’ always indicates a customers’ ledger; membrane usually, but not invariably, indicates that the source is a controller’s roll of particulars.

**DOCUMENT REFERENCE:** This column has been included because a number of the edited accounts 1461-c.1495 are new discoveries, in which parts of the same document are dispersed over one or more orderable documents: that is, the constituent parts of the same original manuscript currently have one or more document references and are physically separated.

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<sup>33</sup> Two farthings make one half-penny; twelve pence make one shilling; twenty shillings make one pound. The use of a formula also meant that value data could be entered *exactly* as in the manuscript – for example, as 100s or 14d rather than £5 or 1s 2d. Half-pennies, however, are entered as two farthings.